Happily Ever After (1989 film)

Happily Ever After (originally released as ***Snow White: The Adventure Continues*** in the Philippines)[2][Note 1] is a 1989 American animated musical fantasy film written by Robby London and Martha Moran, directed by John Howley, and starring Irene Cara, Malcolm McDowell, Edward Asner, Carol Channing, Dom DeLuise and Phyllis Diller.[3]

Its story is a continuation of the fairy tale "Snow White", wherein the titular heroine and the Prince are about to be married, but a new threat appears in the form of the late evil Queen's vengeful brother Lord Maliss. The film replaces the Dwarfs with their female cousins, called the Dwarfelles, who aid Snow White against Maliss.

Happily Ever After is unrelated to Filmation's fellow *A Snow White Christmas*, a television animated film that was the company's earlier Snow White sequel. It was troubled by severe legal problems with The Walt Disney Company, and had a poor financial and critical reception following its wide release in 1993. A video game adaptation was released in 1994.

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Plot

The film starts as the Looking Glass recaps the story of "Snow White". The cruel evil Queen is gone forever (following her death), and the kingdom is now at peace as Snow White and the

Happily Ever After	
Original film poster	
Directed by	John Howley
Written by	Robby London Martha Moran
Produced by	Lou Scheimer
Starring	Dom DeLuise Phyllis Diller Zsa Zsa Gabor Ed Asner Sally Kellerman Irene Cara Carol Channing Tracey Ullman
Edited by	Joe Gall Jeffrey C. Patch Rick Gehr
Music by	Frank Becker
Production company	Filmation Associates
Distributed by	1st National Film Corp.
Release dates	June 30, 1989

Prince prepare to get married.

Meanwhile, back at the late Queen's castle, her animal minions celebrate their freedom by throwing a party for themselves. The Queen's equally evil wizard brother, Lord Maliss, arrives at the castle, looking for his sister. After learning about the Queen's recent demise, he vows to avenge her death by any means. He transforms into a wyvern and takes control of the castle, transforming the area surrounding both the castle and the kingdom into a perilous wasteland. Afterwards, Scowl the owl starts training his companion, a purple bat named Batso, on the ways of evil.

	(Philippines) May 28, 1993 (United States)
Running time	75 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English
Box office	$3.3 million[1]

The next day, Snow White and the Prince are in the meadow picking flowers for their wedding, when Maliss, in his wyvern form, begins attacking Snow White and the Prince as they are traveling to the cottage of the Seven Dwarfs. Unfortunately Scowl who's trying to help Maliss got in his way when trying to capture Snow White again, He captures the Prince, who tried to fight him off but was knocked unconscious by Maliss' magic, but Snow White manages to flee into the woods and reaches the cottage of the Seven Dwarfs.

The next day, Snow White meets the Dwarves' female cousins, the Seven "Dwarfelles": Muddy, Sunburn, Blossom, Marina, Critterina, Moonbeam, and Thunderella. She learns that The Dwarves have left the cottage after they bought another mine in a different kingdom, but the Dwarfelles gladly assist Snow White, taking her to visit Mother Nature at Rainbow Falls. Mother Nature has given the Dwarfelles individual powers to assist her; she holds Thunderella accountable for not being able to master her powers correctly, accuses the other Dwarfelles of improperly using their powers, and threatens to take them away as punishment if they don't learn. Maliss attacks them, but Mother Nature shoots him with lightning, causing him to crash and return him to his human form. Before leaving, Maliss informs Snow White that the Prince is being held captive in his castle.

Snow White and the Dwarfelles travel to Maliss' castle in the Realm of Doom, encountering a strange cloaked humanoid known as the Shadow Man, along the way. Maliss sends his horned wolves after the group and they manage to escape with the help of the Shadow Man. Maliss is furious at this failure and transforms into his wyvern form, finally succeeded in capturing Snow White by himself and taking her to his castle. The Dwarfelles follow them and sneak into the castle as well, while fending off Maliss' minions, including Scowl and Batso.

In the castle, Snow White is reunited with her Prince, who begins acting strangely, and takes her through a secret passage to supposedly escape. When Snow White realizes that he is not the real Prince but he is actually Lord Maliss in disguise. Maliss attempts to throw a magical red cloak on Snow White to petrify her into stone. He almost succeeds, but he is attacked by the Shadow Man, whom he overpowers and seemingly kills. As Maliss tries again to petrify Snow White, the seven Dwarfelles arrive and attack him as well, but fail to do so and become petrified by Maliss. The only one unharmed is Thunderella, who finally gains control of her powers and assists Snow White to defeat Maliss. The cloak is thrown on top of him and he is permanently petrified in mid-transition between his human and wyvern forms.

As the sun shines onto the castle, the Dwarfelles are restored back to their normal selves while Snow White tearfully mourns the "Shadow Man" believing that she has lost both him and her prince until Mother Nature arrives at the scene. Suddenly, the Shadow Man wakes up and he turns out to be the Prince; as he is waking up he comforts Snow White, telling her not to cry as she notices that he is back to his normal self. The Prince reveals that Maliss had cast a spell on him and he has been watching over Snow White during her journey, guarding her with his life. Mother Nature decides to let the Dwarfelles keep their powers because they have finally proven themselves by working together as one, and she allows them to attend Snow White's wedding.

In the end, Mother Nature takes in Batso and Scowl to be trained as her new apprentices; in the process, Scowl has stopped smoking-(thanks to Sunburn) and is able to breathe again as he wasn't able to before, he then comments to Batso that working for Mother Nature won't be so bad. With Snow White and the Prince reunited with each other, the film ends as the two of them share a kiss, and begin to live happily ever after.

Cast

- Irene Cara as Snow White: the beautiful young princess who is now engaged to the Prince.
- Malcolm McDowell as Lord Maliss: a terrible and powerful wizard who seeks revenge for the death of his sister, the Evil Queen by destroying his step niece, Snow White, and her prince.
- Phyllis Diller as Mother Nature: a ditsy embodiment of the forces of nature that gave the Seven Dwarfelles their powers.
- Michael Horton as The Prince: Snow White's handsome fiancé who is now being kidnapped by his fiancé's step uncle, Lord Maliss.
- Dom DeLuise as the Looking Glass: a smart-alec mirror who had served the evil Queen and now does the bidding of Maliss and speaks in rhymes.
- Carol Channing as Muddy: a Dwarfelle who has power over the earth and the bossy leader of the Seven Dwarfelles.
- Zsa Zsa Gabor as Blossom: a Dwarfelle who has power over plants and flowers.
- Linda Gary as:
  - Marina: a Dwarfelle who has power over all lakes and rivers.
  - Critterina: a Dwarfelle who has power over animals. Her physical appearance strongly resembles that of a squirrel.
- Jonathan Harris as the Sunflower: Mother Nature's rude and grumpy assistant.
- Sally Kellerman as Sunburn: a Dwarfelle who has power over sunlight and has a foul temper; but at heart she is a nice and helpful individual.
- Tracey Ullman as:
  - Moonbeam: a Dwarfelle who has power over the night; as shown by Muddy, she is not herself during the daytime causing her to sleepwalk.
  - Thunderella: a Dwarfelle who has power over the weather including thunder and lightning.
- Frank Welker as Batso: a timid bat who is Scowl's best friend.
  - Welker also provides the uncredited vocal effects of Maliss' dragon form, the Shadow-Man and one-horned wolves.
- Ed Asner as Scowl: a sarcastic owl who enjoys smoking and tries to impress Maliss. Due to his smoking habit, he is often seen coughing and weezing-(heavily implying that he's developed a chronic breathing problem).

Music

All lyrics are written by Stephanie Tyrell.

No.	Title	Writer(s)	Performer(s)	Length
1.	"The Baddest"	Ashley Hall	Ed Asner	
2.	"Thunderella's Song"	Richard Kerr	Tracey Ullman	
3.	"Mother Nature's Song"	Barry Mann	Phyllis Diller	
4.	"Love Is the Reason"	John Lewis Parker	Irene Cara	

Production

The film began work in 1986,[4] done 60% overseas.[5] Filmation had previously developed a plan to create a series of direct-to-video sequels to popular Disney motion pictures, but only this and *Pinocchio and the Emperor of the Night* were ever completed. According to the producer Lou Scheimer, Black actress Irene Cara's casting as Snow White was regarded by many (including Cara herself) at the time as strangely "colorblind".[6] Mother Nature's original actress was Joni Mitchell.[7] Scheimer also noted his version of the Snow White as the story's actual heroine as it is she who rescues the prince in an inversion of the traditional version.[8] Lord Maliss was based on Basil Rathbone.[9]

However, then–Walt Disney Productions chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg and spokesman Tom Deegan regarded the projects as "blatant rip-offs" of their properties.[8][10] This led to a lawsuit by The Walt Disney Company in 1987 following the release of *Emperor of the Night*.[8][11] Filmation thus promised their characters would not resemble the ones from the Disney version[12] and changed the title of the film to *Happily Ever After*.[13] Working titles included *Snow White in the Land of Doom*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfelles*, and *Snow White: The Adventure Continues*.[6] Some early merchandise for the movie were actually released under the title *Snow White in the Land of Doom*.

Release

Reportedly completed by 1988,[14] the film premiered in the Philippines on June 30, 1989 as *Snow White: The Adventure Continues*.[2]

Happily Ever After was released in France in 1990 and was intended for the United States as well; however, because Filmation went out of business in 1989,[15] it didn't see theatrical exhibition there until May 28, 1993,[16] during the same summer that Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* received a re-release.[17] The four-day Memorial Day weekend taking was $1.76 million,[18] $2.8 million after ten days and $3.2 million by the next month.[7] The release was preceded by a $10 million advertising campaign and a substantial merchandising effort from North American distributor First National Film Corp.[8] First National's bankruptcy followed just weeks after the film's failed premiere;[7] its President, Milton Verret, was found guilty of defrauding investors.[19][20]

Home media

The film was released on VHS and LaserDisc by Worldvision and later on DVD (in an edit censoring some violence) by 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment. BCI Eclipse re-released the film in a Storybook-themed DVD set alongside *Journey Back to Oz* and *A Snow White Christmas* in 2007.

As of 2021, the rights are owned by Universal Pictures through DreamWorks Animation under their ownership of DreamWorks Classics, which holds the rights to much of the Filmation catalog.

Reception

Despite a substantial advertising campaign and having been expected to become "one of the biggest hits of the year," *Happily Ever After* did poorly in the box office during its theatrical run.[12] Its domestic gross was only $3,299,382.[1]

The film received generally negative reviews by critics. According to Stephen Holden of *The New York Times*, "visually, *Happily Ever After* is mundane. The animation is jumpy, the settings flat, the colors pretty but less than enchanting. The movie's strongest element is its storytelling, which is not only imaginative but also clear and smoothly paced."[21] Kevin Thomas of *Los Angeles Times* opined the characters (especially the Prince) were "bland" and called the film's songs "instantly forgettable."[22] Rita Kemple of *The Washington Post* derided the "inane" humor attempts as well as "badly drawn characters" and their "clumsy" animation.[23] *Desert News*' Chris Hicks similarly wrote, "Sadly, the animation here is weak, the gags even weaker and the story completely uninvolving."[24] Steve Daly of *Entertainment Weekly* gave the film a score of F and recommended to "give this Snow White the big kiss-off."[25] *Chicago Tribune*'s Mark Caro wrote that the comparison with Disney's classic *Snow White* "couldn't be more brutal."[26] Currently the film has a 40% on Rotten Tomatoes.[27]

Some other reviews were more positive. Jeff Shannon of *Seattle Times* opined "this one's a cut above in the animation contest, deserving attention in the once-exclusive realm of Disney and Don Bluth. It almost, but not quite, escapes those nagging comparisons."[28] Ralph Novak of *People* wrote that although "the animation is less sophisticated than the Disney standard," the story "moves nicely, though," with a "colorful" cast of voices.[29] Candice Russell of *Sun-Sentinel* called it "a sweet and likable film," crediting a screenplay "that avoids cuteness and sentimentality and remembers that kiddie fare is fun" and "a few charming songs adding to the merriment."[30]

Video game

An unreleased Nintendo Entertainment System video game was planned in 1991.[31][32] A Sega game was also considered in 1993.[8] An eventual Super Nintendo Entertainment System version was developed by ASC Games and released by Imagitec Design four years later (and one year after the film's release) in 1994.

Notes

1. Also known as ***Snow White: Happily Ever After*** and ***Happily Ever After: Snow White's Greatest Adventure***

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External links

- Official website (Special Edition DVD) (http://www.andymangels.com/SnowWhiteHEA.html)
- *Happily Ever After* (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0099733/) at IMDb
- *Happily Ever After* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/happily_ever_after_1993) at Rotten Tomatoes

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